



# MORELIFE

St Thomas More  
Catholic High School

CHRISTMAS 2023



## SALUTING OUR SISTERS

BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT ST THOMAS MORE



# ST THOMAS MORE CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH



This year, we proudly participated in Black History Month with the theme "Saluting Our Sisters." Throughout October, we celebrated black women's incredible contributions to our society, culture, and history. This theme recognised the remarkable achievements of black women and highlighted their resilience, strength, and influence in shaping our world. We aimed to educate our students about the significant role that black culture has played in various fields, including education, science, the arts, civil rights, and social justice.

During Black History Month, our school hosted events and activities across all year groups to engage our students in meaningful discussions and learning experiences related to this theme. These activities included guest speakers and bespoke lessons in all subjects. We encouraged students to actively participate and engage in these events to gain a deeper understanding of the contributions of black culture throughout history. By promoting and celebrating black contributions to British society and fostering knowledge of black history in general, we encourage a more inclusive and diverse learning environment for our students that values the contributions of all individuals, regardless of their background.

Another event distinct from, yet complementing Black History Month was "Wear Red Day", promoted by the charity "Show Racism the Red Card." In the words of the charity, we were proud as a school to be anti-racist. On Monday 16th October, students wore red badges and they joined in a moment of solidarity by watching a reflection on anti-racism, both visual signs of our stand against racism.

Highlights of the month across both events included:

- Shero lectures in the library.
- Students researched and produced resources celebrating their Sheroes. These were displayed in reception.
- Dedicated timetabled lessons on Black History Month.
- A mini lecture from Newcastle University examining the role of statues in the North East of England and beyond.
- We educated our students on a different Shero each day.
- Our Wear Red Balloon Arch in Reception and the Dining Hall.
- Staff wore red and displayed red in their classrooms.

Thanks to all our community members for your support and participation in our Black History Month and Wear Red Day activities. - Mr Merchant

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH - A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Here at St Thomas More we have recently been learning about different aspirations of people who are black, learning about their childhood and how they have grown up throughout the years. We have studied the challenges that they had to conquer.

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 History were assigned homework to do some research on a famous black person that they admire. Some of the popular

## SHERO LECTURES

As part of our Black History Month celebrations, the library hosted a mini-lecture series which was well-attended by students from Year 7 to Year 13.

First up was Miss Kilkenny who talked passionately about author Toni Morrison, then Mrs Feeney discussed the empowering work of linguist April Baker-Bell on challenging linguistic discrimination.

From the world of STEM, Dr Powell informed us about the amazing work of Annie Easley at NASA. Mr Towns followed this with a powerful talk on his sporting Shero, the British Olympian boxer, Nicola Adams.

To round off the week, we were delighted to welcome Dr Beverley Prevatt Goldstein, who delivered a fascinating, interactive talk on the life of the 19th Century campaigner Ida B Wells. Dr Goldstein is our Shero too - her work on uncovering African Lives in Northern England is inspirational. With Historic England, she's created two Newcastle city centre walks which reveal the untold history of people of African heritage and their contributions to life in the North East. Find out more at [www.africanlivesnortheast.co.uk](http://www.africanlivesnortheast.co.uk)

He was born on the night,  
the 28th April 1888

His parents thought he was a miracle,  
and would grow up to be great.

No one knew what he would become,  
and no-one knew he would die a great one.

People back then said "Black people can't make it in this world,"  
But he knew he had to prove them wrong.

At a young age, he had to 'grow up'  
because his parents died,

and no one could fill this role up,  
which led to him not having a family role model.

As he grew up, football became his thing,  
filling up a light in his life, that was very darkening.

He grew up into an amazing footballer,  
but no-one was there to praise him.

He was left there to fend for himself,  
something you're not supposed to do when you're just a child.

His name was starting to be heard,  
like an echo, but across the world.

But that echo was heard by a team called Clapton FC.  
But that echo wouldn't stop there,

because a team called Tottenham Hotspur  
would make his name loud and clear,

as if the heavens could hear.  
But something had to take it away

and his decisions could have made him live a longer life.  
But as always, he would try to do right.

He joined the British army,  
to the rest of his family's surprise.

He chose to do right.

He was so skilled at what he did  
he was made a British officer  
and it made everyone confused with shock.

But when he died, his spirit did not go,  
because the news spread that an African-Caribbean man  
led an army of white people,

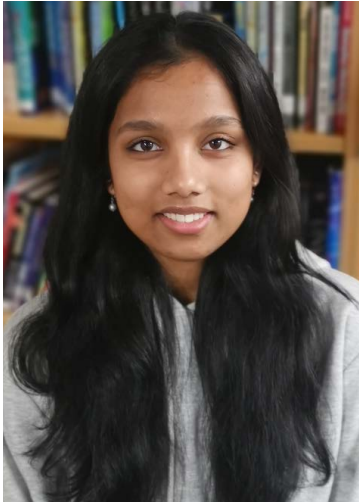
and that gave a glimmer of hope,  
to those who wanted to be free of the mean dark world.

I wrote this poem for a competition at my football academy.  
I chose Walter Tull because I was inspired by his story. He was the first  
black officer in World War One. - Hefsiba Folurunso, Year 7



choices were: Walter Tull (first black army officer), Katherine Johnson (NASA mathematician), Sarah Parker Remond (abolitionist campaigner), Usain Bolt (8 time olympic gold medalist and world record holder). Some of the students' homework is on display at the bottom of the stairs on the History corridor. (see above)

In Year 9 History, when learning about causes of WW1 and WW2, we have looked specifically at soldiers from different countries in the British Empire. When studying the suffragettes we looked at examples of black suffragettes and the reasons why we might not have heard of their names before. - Max Milburn and Gabriella Blackburn, Year 9



ASITHA ANIL

'How can natural light be incorporated into architecture and what are the effects'. I chose this topic due to my love of architecture and I wanted to learn more about lighting and how it could impact us.

Through doing EPQ, it really taught me the importance of time management, which will be useful for me when I go to university. I was also able to learn new skills like referencing and how to independently research and identify credible sources for my essay. One interesting thing I learned through my research was about Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which is a condition that affects people's health due to a lack of sunlight/lighting. Overall, EPQ has been a hard but rewarding experience. I am grateful to have been able to do it.

In my EPQ, I answered the question "Was the Japanese Edo period a significant influence on 19th century Impressionist art?" I hope to study history at university, so I used my EPQ as an opportunity to explore topics I don't learn about at A-level.

By reading sources from contemporary art critics at the time, as well as articles by modern historians, I was able to develop my own, holistic opinion on the relationship between Japanese and Western art. I thoroughly enjoyed and would recommend EPQ, since I have received two reduced offers from universities because I have done one!



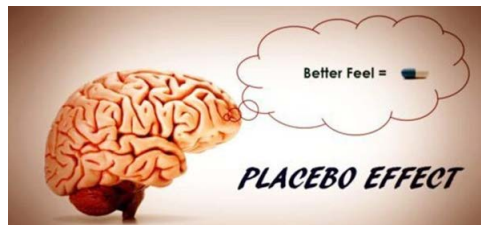
JOSIE GAUKRODGER



# EPQ 2023



We had nine successful EPQ candidates in November, with topics ranging from architecture, blackholes, a study of the impacts of covid, an investigation of the links between mental illness and creativity, the placebo effect and the influence of Japanese art on impressionism. Students have enjoyed the freedom of studying something that they have a passion for, and have been rewarded with a fabulous qualification. - Dr Paradis



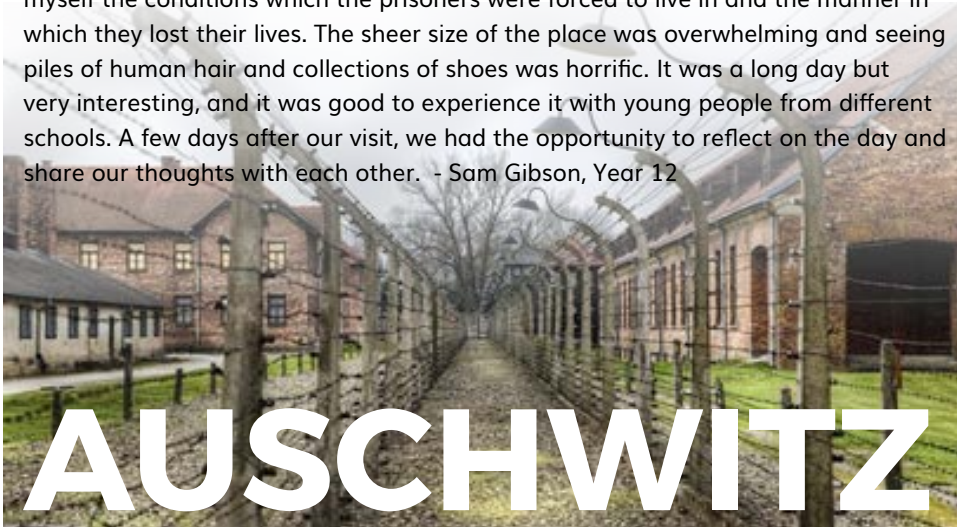
TANUSHRI PUTHALAPATTU

My EPQ answers the question "How does the placebo effect work?"; did you know that half of colitis patients (inflammation of the colon) felt better after receiving a placebo? Yet a placebo contains no pharmaceutical value, it's essentially a sugar pill, so how can an inert substance like a placebo result in pain relief? My EPQ explored this question in further depth by considering different explanations. One such intriguing explanation is doctor-patient relationships and how patients with doctors who listen, communicate effectively and are more empathetic, will experience greater pain relief.

Other than enjoying learning about the psychological field within medicine, I was able to gain a lot of skills along the way. Not only did my EPQ form the bulk of my personal statement, but I used it to get reduced offers for universities.

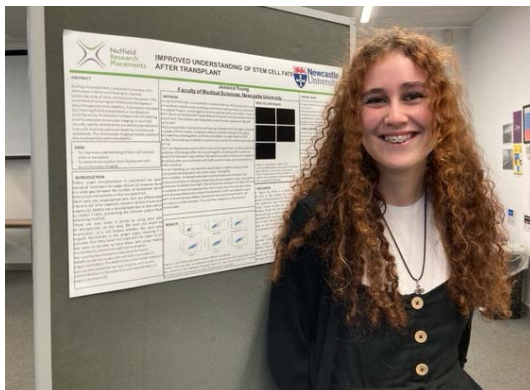
Joyce Misa and I had the privilege of being selected to visit Auschwitz a few weeks ago and the memories of that day will stay with us forever. Our reasons for wanting to go were to pay our respects to the estimated 1.1 million innocent people who lost their lives there and to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive. Some people might argue that what happened there should be forgotten and we should only focus on the future, but we need to learn from the past to avoid making the same mistakes again.

In 2023, there are still people all over the world being persecuted. The ongoing issue of migrants arriving in Britain in small boats has contributed to a huge rise in extreme right wing views. Although I had factual knowledge of what happened at Auschwitz and some insight into personal reflections from reading "The Tattooist of Auschwitz", nothing could prepare me for actually being there and seeing for myself the conditions which the prisoners were forced to live in and the manner in which they lost their lives. The sheer size of the place was overwhelming and seeing piles of human hair and collections of shoes was horrific. It was a long day but very interesting, and it was good to experience it with young people from different schools. A few days after our visit, we had the opportunity to reflect on the day and share our thoughts with each other. - Sam Gibson, Year 12



## JESSICA PRESENTS HER RESEARCH AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

This year, I was fortunate to be selected to participate in a Nuffield Research Placement. This consisted of a two-week placement in the Newcastle University Medical School during the summer, followed by constructing a summary poster and a 10-20 page final report. My research was in the field of biomedical science, specifically stem cell research regarding their fate post-transplantation. During this time, I aided in culturing EA.HY926 cells, which are a type of human cell line, and Multipotent Adult Progenitor Cells (MAPCs), a live/dead viability assay, fluorescent nanoparticle cell labelling and microscope imaging using professional apparatus.



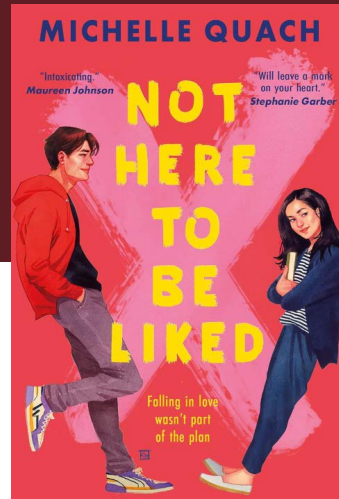
This placement has given me a good amount of laboratory experience, something which will be very beneficial for studying biomedical science at university. I would strongly recommend doing a Nuffield Research Placement, as it provides you with skills and knowledge for life.

- Jessica Young, Year 13

## TEACHER YOUNG ADULT BOOK CLUB

It took a little while for me to get into this one as I struggled to relate to an American high school. However, some interesting themes - intersectional feminism, sibling relationships, gender double-standards and hearing from the point of view of a child of immigrant parents. I did like that they spoke about the Bechdel test; if you don't know what I'm on about look it up!  
- Orlean

Prepare to be surprised if you read this book. I expected not to like it but I did. It claims to be a romance but this is not the biggest element of the story. The other relationships in the book are just as important and the entertaining story looks at the mistakes people make and the prejudices they have against others while trying to be perfect. I found myself rooting for the characters and the support they gave each other. This is a perfect easy read for students in Years 10+ who are trying to relax in the Christmas holidays.  
- Mrs. McEwan



Although I don't usually like romantic novels, this book turns all my expectations upside down. The protagonist, Eliza, was funny and unexpectedly likeable, even though she proudly owns not being liked or being popular. As the drama unfolds in this American high school, the relationship between Eliza and Len becomes more believable. If you like 'Pride and Prejudice' you'll probably like this modern-day update. Look out for the chaotic house party, where lots of surprising revelations change all the characters' lives.  
- Ms. Cantwell-Ahmed



# NEWS AND EVENTS

## CLIPPER RACE UPDATE

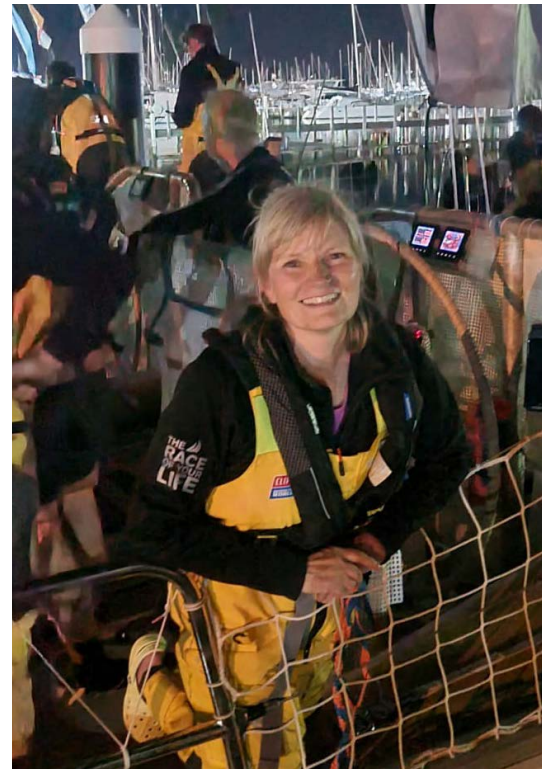
Crossing the Finish Line at 13:32:52UTC on 10 December, Dare To Lead (including our very own intrepid Mrs Roberston) claimed its third consecutive podium of the Clipper 2023-24 Race, placing third on the Race 4: Marlow Roaring Forties Challenge.

The team docked alongside in Fremantle after an incredible race from Cape Town. Skipper Ryan Gibson, First Mate Charlie Warhurst and the crew managed to keep a strong front pack position for most of the 4,700nm race across the Roaring Forties with 27.8 knots its top boat speed.

Ryan said as the team arrived in Fremantle: "To get into Australia in third place is amazing! It was a good race, testing of course, but everyone enjoyed it. Everyone was motivated from the start and we kept it going until the end. I'm extremely proud of the team, especially on this leg with everyone out of their comfort zone. Let's just keep the momentum going forward!"

This result means Mrs Robertson's team are currently in second place overall going into the fifth out of eight legs. Mrs Robertson will be back in school in January and I'm sure she will tell us all about her incredible adventure.

Article adapted from [Clipper Round the World website](#).



## YEAR 8 CREATIVE WRITING AT THE LIT AND PHIL

On the 21st November, 6 students were chosen to take part in a creative writing workshop led by students doing a Masters Degree in Creative Writing at Newcastle University.

We explored the theme of "Discovery", and came up with a short story based on our interpretation of this theme. We discussed the format of our work and how to structure our short stories to engage and entertain a reader. It was interesting to see how broad of a topic "Discovery" was, and to hear all the different ideas that came from the discussions. After writing a short piece in our groups, we critiqued and edited our work, with the help of the workshop leaders, which gave us the chance to share thoughts on what makes a good short story. We were advised on the content; how to create a catchy beginning and ending, how to use descriptive language, and how to portray a message to our readers, with only 1,200 words! - Maggie Stead, Year 8

## DO YOU FIND BRUSSELS SPROUTS BITTER?

Do you find Brussels sprouts bitter? If so, it's because you're tasting the PTC chemical, which is detected by one of the taste receptors on our tongue. This taste receptor is controlled by a gene that can exist in either of two versions - one that allows you to taste it (the taster gene) and one that doesn't let you taste it (the non-taster gene).

At the Centre for Life on a Year 13 Biology trip, we conducted PCR and Gel Electrophoresis to determine which version we possessed. Initially, we extracted DNA from our cheek cells and amplified it to generate millions of copies. We then isolated the particular gene using restriction enzymes to cut our DNA at a precise base site. Subsequently, we applied an electrical current, separating our DNA according to size. By adding a fluorescent marker, we were able to visualise the DNA bands under a UV light, indicating that I possess the non-taster gene.

All in all, it was a fantastic experience, and it allowed us to familiarise ourselves with specialised equipment and procedures currently being used in life-changing research! - Tanushri Puthalapattu, Year 13



# MORE NEWS AND EVENTS



## SIXTH FORM COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS FAIR

On Saturday December 2nd, we organised our first Christmas Fair, with a choice of market stalls including textiles, hot chocolate snacks, house plants, mosaics, macrame, and crochet crafts. To help collect money for their Easter trip to Lourdes, the Lourdes group even formed 'STM Bakes', selling sweets and treats. After putting in a lot of effort to set up a tombola and raffle, Year 12 students announced the winners of some fantastic prizes, including tickets to the Jam Jar Cinema, beauty treatments, a driving lesson, ice skating vouchers, and family swim sessions. The primary school kids enjoyed our assortment of craft stalls as well! They decorated cookies, painted their faces, made ornaments, and received glitter tattoos. The celebration was further enhanced by the wonderful Brooke Pyle, whose live performance brought a particular glamour to the occasion. Hopefully, this is just the first of many events hosted by the CommUNITY group! - Mrs McMillan

## CHRISTMAS BOOK GIFTAWAY

On Monday 11th December the School Library was packed with eager students choosing books from our first ever Christmas Book Giftaway. Hundreds of books had been donated to enable students to choose a book for themselves or as a gift. The optional gift-wrapping service proved immensely popular and was run by our excellent Year 11 Ambassadors (see page 8 and 9). All in all, it was a wonderful, environmentally and budget friendly event! - Ms Edwards, Librarian



## MALICIOUS COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

Kerry Leask from the education team at the Crime Reduction Unit delivered a workshop to all Year seven Students on Malicious Communications. The workshop was about raising awareness, minimising dangers or threats on social media and teaching us how to stay safe online. She taught us what was illegal online behaviour and the consequences this could have. We had a great time listening to Kerry. She used videos and examples that were relevant to students our age and we could relate to them. Kerry was very approachable and easy to talk to. We had lots of questions which she took the time to answer. - Natalia Kierkiez, Year 7

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

One area that the school has been working on recently is provision and attendance at extra-curricular provision. Whether it be sports clubs, music groups, or extended academic sessions, our students have shown a keen interest in broadening their horizons and exploring new passions.

Last half term, an impressive 159 pupils Year 7 students actively participated in a club, and our Year 11 students have also displayed remarkable enthusiasm, with 174 individuals engaging in after-school sessions, mainly revision sessions tailored to their needs. Our breakfast-club bagels have also been popular, with an 80% increase in orders, that's over 700 bagels shared on a weekly basis.



We're thrilled to announce the introduction of several new clubs, including a Science Club specifically designed for Year 7 and 8 students. Therefore, we encourage you to explore the wide range of opportunities available on our website ([www.stmacademy.org.uk/extra-curricular-enrichment/](http://www.stmacademy.org.uk/extra-curricular-enrichment/)) and to support your child in pursuing their interests and passions. I kindly urge you to speak to your child about the benefits of attending an extracurricular club, as it not only enhances their academic progress but also fosters personal growth and development. - Mrs Nelson & Mr Flynn





# YEAR 11 AMBASSADORS

This year has seen a huge number of Year 11 students either apply or be nominated to be ambassadors, and we are very proud of the example that they wish to set for younger students. We wish them all well in their duties over the course of the year. - Miss Allen, Student Council Coordinator



Alesha HAQ  
I am very excited to be a Year 11 Ambassador



Alex DOCHERTY  
I want people to feel like they can approach me for any help



Angelina JIMMY  
I want to make a positive change around school



Annabel WHITEHEAD  
I want to help younger students feel more comfortable



Anya MORRIN  
I want to show struggling Year 7s how fun & exciting school can be



Ava SUTCLIFFE  
I want to help people feel safe at St Thomas More



Bradley MCGUIRE  
I want to help people achieve their goals in their academic lives



Chloe CAIRNS  
I want to be a role model and be helpful towards others



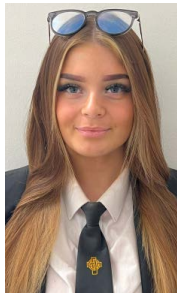
Chloe LACANILAO  
I want to provide a helping hand to those around me



Cj COURTNEY  
I want to make school a safe place for those who struggle with mental health



Diamond OKOYE  
I want to help others navigate the next five vital years



Ella SIMPSON  
I want to help people with mental health issues and make them feel noticed



Ellie ARMSTRONG  
I will be an understanding student others can talk to if they need help



Emily AINSCOUGH  
I will strive to help others to adjust to life at St Thomas More



Evie HACKWORTH  
I want to be a friendly face students can come to about anything



Gabriel MUNSON  
I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Gabrielle PALMEJAR  
I want to support my younger peers but I also want to grow as a person



Georgie BOND  
I want to support and guide the younger years



Grace SALES  
I want to be a role model for all. I want them to know I will be here to listen when they need it



Hannah MCKENZIE  
I want to be there for students to reach out to if they are worried



Holly KERSEY  
I want to contribute to the school community and serve as a voice for my peers



Isla POOLE  
I want to be someone students can approach to help or listen to their problems



Jacob HOLLAND  
I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Jayden STAFFORD  
I want to be a role model to younger students





Joe EGGETT

I want new pupils to feel as welcome as I did



Jonathon GAUKRODGER

I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Josephine DICKINSON

I want to improve our school environment.



Katie DIXON

I want the chance to help my peers



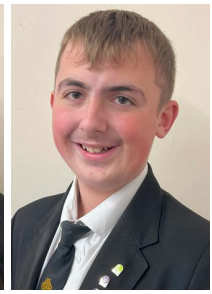
Lauren HASTIE

I want to give back to school, that has given me so much



Lily CLEPHANE

I want the opportunity to help out others who need it



Matthew McDONALD

I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Megan NEASHAM-McMANUS

I want to ensure everyone has the best STM journey



Niamh DALLAT

I want to help Year 7s with things I struggled with



Oleta PAUL

I want to represent the school and help out with issues



Olivia WORRALL

I want to support other students and have responsibility



Rory McMORRAN

I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Ruby LARKINS

I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Sadie LITCHFIELD

I believe helping others is a brilliant quality



Sam BLAIR

Being an ambassador is a new challenge



Sam OWENS

I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Santiago JAMES

I am eager to be a Year 11 ambassador



Ted MILES

I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Tom HORSLEY

I am very excited to be a Year 11 ambassador



Valeriia KOMAROVA

I hope to overcome my own barriers



Zara WHITE

I want to open a dialogue regarding gender issues

## PREPARING YEAR 11 FOR THEIR GCSEs AND MOCK EXAMS

We were delighted by the success of our recent information evening on Thursday 14th December, with over 200 parents and students attending the event.

During the session, parents and carers were equipped with practical techniques to support their children with exam preparation, a common question parents often ask. Hopefully we provided straightforward and effective strategies to empower families in aiding their children's success.

We also demonstrated various revision techniques; by practicing these techniques together, families gained valuable insight into identifying and implementing the most beneficial methods for their children.

The involvement and support of parents/carers plays a pivotal role in their success, particularly during exam periods. We are grateful for the enthusiastic participation and engagement of all who attended, further strengthening our collective commitment to nurturing the academic growth and well-being of our students. - Mr Merchant





# LONDON

## ...EITHER LITERARY OR HISTORICAL...

This November the English Department took 31 wonderful A-Level Lit and Language students on a trip to London.

Highlights included a guided tour of Shakespeare's Globe, followed by a dramatic visit to the gift shop, a visit to the Tate Modern, a gallery so wonderful some students (literally) got lost in it, a West End performance of Moulin Rouge, for which students dressed to impress, and a moving visit to the Imperial War Museum to augment their study of WW1 Literature.

They also experienced the hustle and bustle of Borough Market, the highs and lows of hostel living and the glory of free time in the capital, the use of which showed the varied interests of a wonderfully vibrant group who respectively shopped, were awed by the ancient treasures of the British Museum, visited the King at Buckingham Palace and hunted for pelicans in St James Park! A huge thanks from Mrs Thain, Mrs McHugh and Mrs Heron to all the Year 13s who travelled with them for being such a delightful, curious and interesting group. - Mrs Thain



Some Year 13 students recently went to London to attend a History workshop in which we learnt about exam techniques and listened to a lecture on the Tudor dynasty by Tracy Borman, published historian and joint chief curator at Historic Royal Palaces with Lucy Worsley. This was extremely beneficial in adding new skills into our writing and having a wider breadth of knowledge on what the exam board is truly wanting from us.

We also had a trip to the Tower of London in which we spoke to an historian who took us through crucial events that happened whilst the Tudors reigned, including the exact spot where Anne Boleyn was beheaded! Perhaps the most exciting part was seeing Six the Musical, where Henry's six wives tell their stories. Finally we went to see Sir Francis Drake's Golden Hind, the boat he circumnavigated the world in. The trip was only possible thanks to Mrs Mole's incredible organisational skills and to Mrs McCabe making sure Jake had his epi-pen and keeping us all safe.. We had an amazing trip and we would all definitely recommend it.

- Sophie Potter, Emilia Davis and Aarron Cook, Year 13

## ...OR LOURDES (via SLALEY)

On Saturday 2nd December 15 Year 12 students donned their wholly hats and gloves and braved temperatures of -5 degrees to meet at college at 8am! We travelled by minibus to Slaley, Northumberland (the secret kingdom) where we were rewarded with a wonderful walk in a magical winter's setting. The students walked 10 miles across farmland & through the quaint villages of Whitley Chapel & Juniper.

They enjoyed the best lunch of the week in an idyllic setting on the banks of the river, most having a hot flask & plenty of chocolate!

Between them they raised a magnificent £2000 to help pay towards their fare to Lourdes at Easter. A fabulous group, an amazing day, well done Year 12! - Mr Murray



# PINK DAY 2023

This year's Pink day was a great success, a fantastic start to the beginning of the new academic year for the whole of Sixth Form. Pink Day taught all of us so much about breast cancer awareness, including Mrs Borwick's touching assembly talking about her own family's experiences with breast cancer. The event brought us closer as a community in order to raise money for this extremely worthwhile cause.

St Thomas More raised a whopping £863.65, which will go to Breast Cancer Now and a local charity Live Well with Cancer, who work with people in North Tyneside. We raised this money through selling cakes and biscuits, which some students even made themselves. The number of sixth formers who came in wearing pink was amazing as it shows just how powerful Pink Day is.



Pink Day also taught us that giving is important. There was free face painting, glitter tattoos and coloured hair to ensure that nobody was left out. Doing things such as face painting ensures that students don't need to go out of their way to buy pink clothing for Pink Day, it really is just a day to look forward to!!!  
- Jacob Bell & Isla Tipton, Year 12



## MFL CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year, the Languages Department have launched a Foreign Language Christmas Card Competition. Students design a card which shows the Christmas traditions of another country for a chance to win prizes - any language but English is accepted! So far, we have been really impressed by the effort that has gone into the hand-made entries. At KS3, languages of cards include French (Joyeux Noël, Le père Noël), German (Frohe Weihnachten), Polish (Wesołych Świąt), Maori (Meri Kirihimete), and more! The KS4 entries we have received have blown us away by the talent of students. Examples include Polish - with lots of traditions and illustrations inside - plus German with the tradition of Krampus painted on the front of the card. - Frau Finn

## EVE GAINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

I have been a young leader for my local Brownies unit since the beginning of 2021. During lockdown, I helped plan, organise and run Brownies meetings on zoom each week, a role I have continued ever since. I have continued to attend weekly meetings despite challenges such as my GCSEs and being a young carer for my Mum. A few weeks ago I was nominated to attend an awards ceremony in London to celebrate my achievements. It was a red carpet event at the Odeon Luxe Leicester Square and so everyone got to dressed up and had professional photographs taken. Girlguiding is my safe space, and I keep on going so that it can be a safe space for any of the girls who need it too. - Eve Keys, Year 12



# MACY CUNNINGHAM DANCES HER WAY TO WORLDS

Huge congratulations to Macy Cunningham in Year 9, who was recently placed in the top five Irish dancers in the North East. This means she has qualified to represent our region in the World Championships of Irish Dancing 2024 which will be held in Glasgow in April 2024. This is an amazing achievement; we wish her all the best in the Spring.



## EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

As always, we love to share the stories of our students and what they have gone on to achieve. When students leave us they don't always know where they will end up, but we hope to equip them with the necessary skills to succeed in whatever path they choose. If you or a member of your family would like to feature here please contact [alogie@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:alogie@stmacademy.org.uk).



### GEORGINA THOMPSON (née ROBSON) 2001 - 2008

After my Undergraduate and Masters degrees, I graduated as a Chartered Architect in 2016. I've been lucky enough to have some incredible career experiences to date. I currently work as a Workplace Design Manager for the UK Government on large Capital Project programmes; the two projects I am overseeing at the moment are worth over £140 million pounds and the scale is incredible. I sometimes work on "Top Secret" designs and have to hold a very high security clearance! When I am able to juggle my job with looking after my son Oscar, I also speak at events and mentor future architects. I look back fondly on my time at St Thomas More and still clearly remember Mrs Lockhart helping me in the art classroom to prepare a portfolio for my first ever architecture interview!

### ROSS THIRKETTLE 2007 - 2012

Leaving school at the age of 16 I had no idea what I do.

I was scared as I didn't have a clear path and not even the best grades. I left for college to train to become cabin crew but it wasn't for me. I have since tried lots of different roles to work out what I want to do. It wasn't until I was 25 that I found a love for healthcare and began training to become an ambulance care assistant. I was always fascinated by the stories from my Dad, who is also a paramedic. Two years later I am now fully qualified and work for the North East Ambulance Service. I help elderly people get to appointments, work with A and E to admit and discharge patients and provide excellent care to all those I work with. Not knowing what I wanted to do 12 years ago has not had a negative impact on where I have ended up; I would never have thought back in school I would be where I am today. Happy, healthy and in a job I adore.



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